THE CINEMATHEQUE

'78

The regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde films.

Shows on Thursdays and Sundays at 8:00 PM at the San Francisco Art Institute, 800 Chestnut St., S.F. Donation $2. Free coffee. For information call 586-8486.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

Best of the poetry film festival

FROM THE 1ST AND 2ND POETRY FILM FESTIVALS

As the S.F. Poetry Film Workshop gets into swing and the 1978 Poetry Film Festival commences its third year of operations the Cinematheque wishes to acknowledge the work of the fistival's director, Herman Berlandt, with this showing of prizewinning films from the first two Poetry Film Festivals. The poetry film as a genre probably had its origions in the works of Willard Mass and James Broughton although they probably weren't conscious of it at the time. Herman Berlandt is doing a great deal to make this a permanent art form by encouraging cooperation between poets and filmmakers through the auspices of his Poetry Film Workshop. He will be present to discuss the films as well as the workings of The Poetry Film Workshop.

This evening's program will contain the fillowing 13 films:

TWO POEMS (2min.) by Bruce Wands -- Get your poems on Broadway in lights.

BUTTERFLY MAN AND THE WOMAN (12min.) --animation. Poem by William Pitt Root based on an Indian legend. film by Ray Rice

COLD COWS (2min.) by Franklin Miller-- BALD EAGLE GRAVEYARD & HARPER'S FERRY (5min.) by George Hornbein -- Two poems by John Balaban on two historic settings.

OLD (4min.) by Jamil Simon -- How the graciously old remember childhood, on a poem by Ann Sexton.

SECTO AND THE SECONAUT (9min.) by Mike Conner -- clay animation. EVERYMAN'S vanity and self-doubts.

SCREW (3min.) by Margaret Bailey Doogan -- Expansive dictionary definition shaped into a poem by Diane Wakowski.

YANTEE (7min.) by Michael Lemle -- Black painter, Yantee Bell provides music, poem and mural for Boston's inner city.

FIRST WILL AND TESTAMENT (3min.) by Dan McLaughlin -- animation. A mischevieous fugue in animation.

SEVEN FOR A MAGICIAN (10min.) by Ray Rice -- animation. The magician evokes powers of awakening in others. poem by William P.Root

MADSONG (5min) by Kathleen Laughlin -- animation. Conveys the introspection of a girl between childhood and womanhood.

FRANKFILM (9min.) by Frank & Caroline Mouris -- animation. "A true story of my life from the beginning to the present"-totally compacted

MARIAGE (10min.) by Judith Mann -- poem and narration by Gregory Corso. Introspective review of all the possibilities.

Clifton Chenier in Les Blank's HOT PEPPER

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

The New S.F. Filmmakers

Ever since the forties, San Francisco has been, along with New York City, one of the main centers of independent film activity. Of late there has been a bit of irresponsible journalism in the underground press to the effect that since the last upsurge in the sixties there has been a decline in San Francisco film-making. We maintain the opposite of this is the truth; there has never been such a proliferation of good films to choose from as there is now. There are literally hundreds of filmmakers in the bay area who are working independently of the industry in all the various categories of (personal, documentary & narrative) film. The cinematheque is dedicated to showing the best of these works as they come to our attention.

Our program will include:

SOMA (17min.) by Sandra Davis

VENETIAN BLUE (4min.) by Janet Perlberg

TRAFFICING THE RHYTHM LOGIC OF A SLIP-MIXER SOCIETY (7min.) by Mark McGowan.

CETOLOGY (11min.) by Jac White

SEDUCTION AND BETRAYAL (30min.) by Stephanie Beroes

TABLEAU VIVANT (8min), RELATIVE STAGES (7min.) and WEATHERED WEAVINGS (5min.) by Jim Flam

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

Eisenstein/Dovzhenko

THE GENERAL LINE and UKRAINE IN FLAMES

The two giants of the early Soviet narrative film cast long shadows - despite the tremendous respect that both Eisenstein and Dovzhenko commanded during their lifetimes, their presence as directors seems to have grown even greater after their deaths. Substantial reconstructions of lost works by both directors have been undertaken in recent years, but despite the widespread interest in their work among the cinema establishment, certain works by both directors have been neglected. Tonight's program consists of one seldom-seen film by each of these enduring masters.

THE GENERAL LINE (1929, 72 min.) was Eisenstein's last silent film and signalled the beginning of his interest in seperating the individual hero from the masses of his earlier films. The heroine of THE GENERAL LINE is Marfa, a peasant woman who wishes to introduce collective farming to her community. She is the prototype of the popular leader that Eisenstein would later develop in ALEXANDER NEVSKY and in his study of power, IVAN THE TERRIBLE. Interestingly, the subject matter of the film as well as Eisenstein's decision to use all non-professional actors is very reminiscent of Dovzhenko's work, notably EARTH and IVAN. The execution of the filming and editing, however, is pure Eisenstein, particularly in his fascination with montage of people and machines and his hints at a decaying interest in Socialist Realism.

Dovzhenko's UKRAINE IN FLAMES (1945, 56 min.), on the other hand, has a slight resemblance to some of Eisenstein's early films, although it is above all a demonstration of the power of Dovzhenko's vision imposing itself onto documentary footage of the World War II battle for the liberation of the Ukraine. Edited by Iulia Solntseva (who was married to Dovzhenko) and Yakov Avdyenko, UKRAINE IN FLAMES bears Dovzhenko's name in the role of production supervisor. "From its opening scenes of the rich Ukrainian crops of 1941, waiting for harvest, but reaped by bombers, this is an astonishingly personal film, making one believe that its 'supervisor' has controlled all the seemingly uncontrollable elements of unstaged reality. It is obvious that the 'directors' and the 24 cameramen believed unitedly in Dovzhenko..." -- Jay Leyda, Kino

Alla Nazimova in SALOME

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

Michael Mideke

"FLIGHT OF SHADOWS" AND OTHER FILMS

MICHAEL MIDEKE IN PERSON

Michael Mideke was the moving force behind the upsurge of film-making at Antioch College in the early sixties which spawned such filmmakers as Paul Sharits, Bill Brand, Warren Sonbert and many others. His films have shown often here over the years. He has been living in utter seclusion in the hills of San Simeon for several years and this is his first appearance at the Cinematheque in over five years. He will be coming with a new batch of films never seen here before.

Like Bruce Baillie his images have an incredible beauty of their own. His highly intuitive editing style has an intelligence all its own. Each moment seems to arise dynamically and elucidate upon the previous moment and the total form is revealed or actually discovered as an extention of the content

"My films are not puzzles made up of symbols to be solved through interpretation, they are just things to be seen and felt with some detachment as you might listen to a piece of music or observe the play of light and shadow outside your own window.

"Film offers us a means of honing our perceptions both of the world and of our own being. It offers us a chance to see things afresh, a way to scrub away some of the clouds of our obscuring self-importance. It offers fresh ways to touch the world. And right now we are desperately out of touch with the world; we are living in the collective fantasy that is the world according to civilized mankind. It is becoming increasingly apparent that this world-view sits on too narrow and fragile a foundation, a foundation which must be broadened to include much we have forgotten or never known."

This program is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington D.C., a Federal agency.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

Film Accordin' to Les Blank

LES BLANK IN PERSON

Les Blank has become one of the bay area's most prolific and respected filmmakers. Many of his earlier films have been featured on programs here and has had many one-man shows throughout the bay area. This is his first at the Cinematheque. He is probably best known for his films which document American folk cultures. Of his films Thom Willenbecher has said:

"For the most part, Blank avoids editorial comment, preferring instead to create a total impression of the varied and often contradictory lives of his subjects. By focusing occasionally on their deficiencies, he avoids romanticizing them, and by letting them speak he avoids patronizing them as well. Where the choice is between describing the music and describing the people's lives, Blank concentrates on the music. When forced to choose between giving a confused view of a situation and giving an oversimplified one, he keeps the wide focus and lets the ambiguities stand as they exist in real life."

Our program will begin with three shorter films which have rarely been shown in this area and end with two music films which are more familiar to bay area audiences:

CHICKEN REAL (1970) 20min. -- was made for Holly Farms in Wilkes County NC, the heart of the moonshine country where revenuers outnumber the narcotic agents 3 to 1.

THE CHICKEN FILM (1960) 3.5min. -- Blank's first film. The footage was seized by the head of the school lab at UCLA for its pornographic symbolism. "The camera instructor gave me a "C" grade for the obscene act of taking an innocent chicken's life on screen...SEVENTH SEAL symbolism is tip of the hat to Ingmar Bergman, who inspired me to go into films at age 22."

"..." (1976) --selection from an unreleased film on a major rock star, featuring a chicken dinner. Also considered obscene by many.

HOT PEPPER 54min..."is an explosive film that plunges the viewer into the life and music of Clifton Chenier, the great Creole accordian Bluesman." --Michael Goodwin, CITY MAGAZINE

THE BLUES ACCORDIN' TO LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS 31min. "There is more art, more truth, more beauty, and more musicianship in THE BLUES ACCORDIN' TO LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS than in any music film I've ever seen."-- Roger Greenspun, NEW YORK TIMES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

BRICKWALL et al.

AUSTRALIAN FILMMAKER PAUL WINKLER IN PERSON

When filmmaker Aggy Read came here a year ago with a package of films from the Australian co-op the one film which impressed us the most was a film entitled BRICKWALL. As it turned out Paul Winkler, the maker of that film was a bricklayer by trade and he films this enormous brick wall with such sensitivity that you come away from that film utterly transformed. He has succeeded in taking that brick wall and making it into something warm, yielding and personal. His recent film BARK-RIND was a prize winner on last year's Ann Arbor Film Festival tour. Now, after an around-the-world tour of film festivals and archives, we are happy to be able to present Mr. Winkler and his films here at the Cinematheque.

This evening's program will include:

SCARS (1972) 15 min. -- The outcry of Mutilated trees - P.W.

BRICKWALL (1975) 22min. An ode to Bricklaying - P.W.

RED CHURCH (1976) 15min. Still image - motion image- kinetic image-P.W.

BACKYARD(1977) 14min.

BARK-RIND (1976-77) 27min. - Polyphonic images and sound relating to the growth structure of grass-soil-bark-flowers-trees- P.W.

"My approach to filmmaking is primarily an organic one. The films are a synthesis of the intellect and emotion all filtered through the plastic material of film. I try to let the images flow freely to the surface." -Paul Winkler

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Jordan/Bonnemaison

THE ANCIENT MARINER and "TABLEAUX"

Tonight, two premieres: the first public showing of Larry Jordan's new film, THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER, and of French filmmaker Michel Bonnemaison's TABLEAUX DES INDES GALANTES.

Larry Jordan (DUO CONCERTANTES, OUR LADY OF THE SPHERE, etc.) should be familiar to everyone in these parts. "In his latest film, THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER (50 mins.), Larry Jordan has taken the Coleridge poem, narrated by none other than the great Orson Welles along with the classic Doré prints and created a film which utterly transcends all of its various parts. This is by far the most interesting and subtle work assembled from other works of art I have ever seen. Jordan succeeds in making this poem 'live' as it has never lived before. I think this film will be in every school film library in the country. Grade school students will see this film and perhaps many will take up the study of serious poetry as they once did before the invention of television began its stranglehold on the minds of our youth in the early fifties."

-- Carmen Vigil

"One thing: If I'd have to name one dozen really creative artists in the independent (avant-garde) film area, I'd name Larry Jordan as one. His animated (collage) films are among the most beautiful short films made today. They are surrounded with love and poetry. His content is subtle, his technique is perfect, his personal style unmistakable." -- Jonas Mekas

Michel Bonnemaison is a less well known but very gifted filmmaker from France, who is currently working through the Montfaucon Research Center in Montreal, Canada. The bulk of his films are portraits of the Americas, seen through the wide open camera of a Visitor. Bonnemaison writes of TABLEAUX DES INDES GALANTES (36 min.), "18th century, an opera by J.P. Rameau 'Les Indes Galantes' confronted with the realities of today's Amerinds.

"Filmed in Central Cine. Three tableaux enlighten the purpose: under the regard of the screen, the spectators and the actors. The sets are real, the forest ever green in the rhythm of the seasons."

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Sara Kathryn Arledge

SARA KATHRYN ARLEDGE IN PERSON

On may 2, 1947, Sara Arledge's INTROSPECTION premiered at the S.F. Museum of Art on the "Art in Cinema" series which was the first organized screenings of experimental films on the west coast. Now just 30 short years later, we present the Northern California premier of her second film, WHAT IS A MAN? and the first public screening of her most recent film, INTERIOR GARDEN, which she describes as a "stabile film", along with a slide performance entitled, INTERIOR GARDEN I & II. Sara Arledge comes to us from Pasadena where she has been spending most of her time painting until taking up with the film muse once more which is being honored by this evening's show.

Of her first film, INTROSPECTION, Lewis Jacobs has written: "None of the dectable patterns of dance choreography are seen in this picture... Instead, disembodied parts of dancers are seen moving freely in black space. Dancers wear tights blacked out except for particular parts--a hand, arm shoulder, torso or entire body--which are specially colored and form a moving and rhythmic three-dimensional design of semi-abstract shapes...

The result is a kind of abstraction and a completely new visual experience, especially heightened when two or three colored forms are juxtaposed in multiple exposure. The use of color is striking and unlike color in any other experiment thus far...It's departure in technique suggests new directions in unconventional and abstract cinema."

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

DUEL IN THE SUN

and BIG ROASTING EARS

Tonight's program is an attempt to "think big", a state of mind that leads directly towards Chuck Statler's BIG ROASTING EARS, because of its title, and towards King Vidor's DUEL IN THE SUN, the ultimate Big Western by means of which producer David O. Selznick tried to outdo his own juggernaut GONE WITH THE WIND.

BIG ROASTING EARS (7 min.) by Chuck Statler - Found footage from the forties and fifties, fitted to frolicing females and fixed fruit, forms a fond forward, for fervent film fetishists, to the following feature.

DUEL IN THE SUN (130 min.) directed by King Vidor, with the participation of William Dieterle, Joseph von Sternberg, and possibly D.W. Griffith, narrated by Orson Welles, photographed by Lee Garmes, Ray Rennahan and Harold Rosson, starring Lionel Barrymore, Lillian Gish, Joseph Cotten, Gregory Peck, Jennifer Jones, Walter Huston...in short, Selznick mustered all the talents of Hollywood into one gigantic technicolor panorama combining the biggest and best elements of all previous westerns. The word "horse opera" has been used to degrade westerns from Tom Mix to QUICK BILLY, but here for once is a western worthy of the term "opera", a grandiose, almost pictorially musical event worthy of Wagner or Mozart.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12

ORGANIC OBOE

MIXED MEDIA PERFORMANCE BY JOSEPH CELLI

This evening's program is a collection of mixed and multi-media featuring film, live electronic music, slides, synthesizer, theatre, poetry and of course oboe and english horn. Even though Joseph plays an instrument which is more closely associated with the symphonic masters such as Mozart and Beethoven he will be performing music written since 1965. Oboists willing to perform new music are far and few between but Mr. Celli is virtually the only American oboist extensively working in the field of new music with live electronics and mixed media.

"I call what I do 'Organic Oboe'. Even though I fully realize that the world organic is a bit overused these days it does accurately describe what I'm doing. In performance I take very primitive sounds from the oboe and transform them into very complex sounds. I don't limit myself to the 32 traditional pitches on the instrument. And with electronic extension there is no limit to the possibilities. I've begun a real exploration of this instrument. By organic, I mean that I am just following the natural growth of my discoveries. There's no telling where it'll all end."

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

Divine Decadence

SALOME

ROBERT HAVING HIS NIPPLE PIERCED

SCORPIO RISING

These three films make up a tribute to one of art's oldest and most constantly productive sources, Decadence. SALOME (35 min.), already a past classic, gone but not forgotten, was made in 1922 and harkens back even further, to the turn-of-the-century drawings of Aubrey Beardsley, whose work served as an inspiration for the costumes and sets of the film, designed by Natasha Rambova, to the Oscar Wilde play that furnished the screenplay and to Richard Strauss' opera "Salome", itself based on Wilde's play, which provided the score, and further still, back to the biblical origins of the story of Salome and Saint John the Baptist. Silent star Alla Nazimova, coming to the American screen by way of Stanislavski's acting school in Moscow, wrote and starred in SALOME, and her husband Charles Bryant directed this opulent gem of a film, steeped in style.

ROBERT HAVING HIS NIPPLE PIERCED (33 min.) by Sandy Daley is up-to-date decadence in its youthful punk roots. "...a homosexual, suitably soothed by his lover, has a nipple ring inserted while on the soundtrack, his girlfriend (Patti Smith) talks splendidly at random about her bizarre childhood and sexual experiences. A lot of it is riotously funny, and peculiar though the people involved are, at least you feel that they are real and that their lives make a sort of sense, if only to themselves."

-- John Russell Taylor, The London Times

Kenneth Anger's SCORPIO RISING (29 min.) is "A conjuration of the Presiding Princes, Angels, and Spirits of the Sphere of MARS, formed as a 'high' view of the Myth of the American Motorcyclist. The Power Machine seen as a tribal totem, from toy to terror. Thanatos in chrome and black leather and bursting jeans. Part I: Boys & Bolts: (masculine fascination with the Thing that Goes). Part II: Image Maker (getting high on heroes: Dean's Rebel and Brando's Johnny: The True View of J.C.). Part III: Walpurgis Party (J.C. wallflower at cycler's Sabbath). Part IV: Rebel Rouser (The Gathering of the Dark Legions, with a message from Our Sponsor)... Songs interpreted by Ricky Nelson, Little Peggy March, The Angels, Bobby Vinton, Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, The Crystals, The Ron-Dells, Kris Jensen, Claudine Clark..." -- Kenneth Anger

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